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Fu'st Aid to Cupid



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FU'ST AID TO CUPID

OR

THE SHAM DOCTOR

A MINSTREL ABSURDITY

BY
WADE STRATTON

AUTHOR OF

"Almost An Actor," "An Awful Appetite," "The Barber's Bride,"
"A Burnt Cork Barrage," "Cash Money," "Hitting the
African Harp," "Kiss Me, Camille!" "When
Cork is King," Etc.



CHICAGO
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FU'ST AID TO CUPID

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CHARACTERS.

WILLIE WATT.....*Alias Dr. Bugg*
JULIUS JAZBO JAXON.....*A Suitor Outa Luck*
BOLIVAR BROWN.....*A Sickly Ol' Critter*
LIZA.....*A Near-French Maid*
ROSY BROWN*Bolivar's Blushin' Baby*

SCENE—*Up to Rosy's House.*

PLACE—*In Swell Mahogany Circles.*

TIME—*Springtime, Mos' Likely.*

TIME OF PLAYING—*About Twenty Minutes.*

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TYPES AND COSTUMES.

All the characters are darkies. The women characters are to be played by men. All may make up black with burnt cork if it is not desired to use grease paints for "high brown" complexions.

WILLIE—A coal-black colored man, tall, thin and hungry-looking. Has general air of dilapidation. Wears misfit clothes; short, tight pants; white socks; black low shoes that are too large; broken derby hat; plain negro wig.

JULIUS—A "high-yaller" darky, somewhat undersized. Wears flashy clothes of ridiculous elegance. Gaudy neck-scarf, silk shirt, vest and socks, of colors that clash; plenty of jewelry; cane; brown derby hat; plain negro wig, or has straight black hair.

BOLIVAR—Aged negro, with dark brown make-up. Feeble and irascible. Wears dressing gown and house slippers. Uncle Tom wig.

LIZA—A black negress. Wears burlesque adaptation of French maid costume with white apron and cap; "fuzzy-wuzzy" wig.

ROSY—A great big "yaller gal" of the super-romantic type. Wears loud dress burlesquing current fashions, and made in bright colors; Topsy wig.

STAGE DIRECTIONS.

R. means right of stage; *C.*, center; *R. C.*, right center; *L.*, left; *U. E.*, upper entrance; *R. D.*, right door; *L. D.*, left door, etc.; *D. F.*, door in flat or back of the stage; up stage, away from footlights; down stage, near footlights. The actor is supposed to be facing the audience.

FU'ST AID TO CUPID

SCENE: *A garden. Set house or cottage, or porch, with practical door, up R. Bench down L. Other stage properties for garden set ad lib. (NOTE: If scenery is not available, this sketch may be played on any platform, with a few branches, palms or ferns distributed about to suggest an exterior.)*

At rise, ROSY stands down L., looking off, as though trying to spy someone. BOLIVAR enters from house, with a long blacksnake whip in his hand, and glares at her.

BOLIVAR. Rosy! (*No answer.*) Rosy! (*No answer.*) Dawg-gone that gal, she kin pestifferate mah animosity jest so far! (*Cracks whip at her.*) Rosy!

ROSY (*turns and sees him*). Hello, paw. Is it you?

BOLIVAR (*mocking*). Hello, paw, is it me? I reckon you 'spect somebody else; maybe that low-down, ornery Julius Jazbo Jaxon, huh? Is you 'spectin' him, huh? (*Brandishes whip menacingly.*) Is you?

ROSY. No, paw. I ain't 'spectin' nobody only my own sweet pappy.

BOLIVAR. Then git inside an' 'spect me thah. (*Points to house.*) I don't suspect you outen my sight.

ROSY. Paw, what you gwine do wiv that mule-skinneh?

BOLIVAR. Gwine skin a big black jassack name Julius Jazbo Jaxon, that's what I gwine.

ROSY (*pleading*). Oh, paw! Don't you lay no hand on mah Julius Jazbo Jaxon, mah lovin' man, mah sweet patooty.

BOLIVAR. Gal, dry up yo' face an' beat it hence, 'fo' I gives you what I got saved up fo' Julius Jazbo Jaxon, yo' sweet patooty. (*Points to house.*) Git in the house, while yo' got yo' health!

ROSY. But paw—I loves mah Julius.

BOLIVAR (*sternly*). No child of mine kin eveh git obnoxious with a sweet patooty. (*Threatens with whip.*) Git out, befo' I fo'gets to lose mah temper!

ROSY (*weeping*). Paw, you is breakin' mah innocent young heart.

BOLIVAR. You is lucky I ain't broke yo' innocent young wishbone.

ROSY (*weeping*). You is too rough with yo' li'l' baby Rosy.

BOLIVAR (*penitently*). Fo'give me, li'l' baby Rosy. It's mah misery what makes me peevish-like. Will yo' fo'give yo' ol' black pappy?

ROSY (*stroking his cheek*). Yes, paw—if you'll let me marry mah sweet patooty.

BOLIVAR (*furiously*). What? How come you make talk about that no-'count niggeh again? I'll—I'll— (*Brandishes whip.*)

ROSY (*snatching whip from him*). You'll run fo' yo' life, that's what you'll do, or they'll be a big black jassack skinned, but you won't do the skinnin'! (*Cracks whip at BOLIVAR, who runs, yelling, into the house, pursued by ROSY.*)

WILLIE *enters down L., as ROSY snatches the whip, and watches the rumpus with much interest.*

WILLIE (*watching them go*). Fire in the mountain—run, gal, run! Oh, mamma, bet yo' money on the sorrel mare! This ain't no quiet place fo' a 'spectable cullud gentleman. On yo' way, Willyum, on yo' way. (*Starts to go.*)

LIZA *enters from house.*

WILLIE (*seeing her*). Mamma, wash the suppeh dishes. I won't be home till late. (*Sits on bench.*)

LIZA. Black man, who is you?

WILLIE. Black baby, I is a wanderin' wagabond, without wim, wigor, witality or wittles. When does we eat?

LIZA. What you doin' hyah?

WILLIE. Coolin' mah feet.

LIZA. Is you lookin' fo' a job?

WILLIE. Say "job" to me an' mah feet is done cooled. Ah is lookin' fo' a square meal.

LIZA. We don't 'low no bums around hyah.

WILLIE. Has you folks got a dog?

LIZA. Is you fond of dogs?

WILLIE. No, but dogs is pow'ful fond of me. Look at mah pants! Who is you?

LIZA. I works fo' Miss Rosy Bolivar. I is her French maid.

WILLIE. You is which?

LIZA. French maid.

WILLIE. You looks to me mo' like Alabama made, gal. Kin you talk French talk?

LIZA. Sure I kin. Kin you?

WILLIE. Jes' watch me. Bon joor, mamiselle, promenade, oo-la-la, sweet patooty. (*With bum French accent*). Come on, gal, now show me kin you shake a mean accent. Say, "we, we, m'soor."

LIZA. That ain't what I says.

WILLIE. What does you say, French maid?

LIZA (*snapping fingers at him*). Poo-poo fo' you. (*Quick exit, laughing, into house.*)

WILLIE (*sadly, to himself, snapping fingers*). Poo-poo fo' you! Poo-poo fo' you!

Enter JULIUS down L.

JULIUS (*suspiciously*). Who you poo-poo-in', niggeh?

WILLIE (*surprised*). Huh?

JULIUS (*threateningly*). Is you poo-poo-in' me?

WILLIE. I don't poo-poo nobody but mah friends. Me an' you is strangehs.

JULIUS. How come you dallyin' 'round mah Rosy's house. Niggeh, what's yo' name?

WILLIE. Willie.

JULIUS (*sarcastically*). Willie! That ain't no healthy name fo' a coon.

WILLIE. I ain't a healthy coon. Mah stomach ain't had a day's work since—(*mention recent local happening*).

JULIUS. Well, Willie, what's yo' full name?

WILLIE. Neveh heerd of a full name fo' a empty niggeh.

JULIUS. I mean, what is yo' complete name? Yo' last name?

WILLIE. Mah name been Willie, fu'st an' last, since mah ma gimme it.

JULIUS. You black bucket of coal tar, I means *all* of yo' name. Willie what?

WILLIE. Da's right. Willie Watt.

JULIUS. Well, Willie, what's yo' last name?

WILLIE. Watt's mah last name.

JULIUS. What?

WILLIE. Watt.

JULIUS. What is?

WILLIE. Watt is.

JULIUS. Don't you git obstroperous with me, boy! Why don't you answer? What's yo' last name?

WILLIE. Why don't you listen? Watt's mah last name.

JULIUS. You big black bonehead, ain't you got no sense? Now listen. Yo' last name is what?

WILLIE. Mah last name is Watt.

JULIUS. That's what I axed you.

WILLIE. That's what I done tol' you.

JULIUS (*frantic*). Yo' name is Willie—what?

WILLIE. I ain't argufyin'. My name is Willie Watt.

JULIUS (*drawing razor*). Boy, you is got only one mo' chance left. Tell me, an' tell me quick!

WILLIE. Mah last name is Watt.

JULIUS (*brandishing razor*). Come on, spill it!

WILLIE. Spell it? Why didn't you ax me to spell it befo'? W-I-L-L-I-E, Willie; W-A-T-T, Watt.

JULIUS (*understanding*). Oh, yo' name is Watt?

WILLIE. Don't you ax me no mo'. I'm sick o' dis game.

JULIUS. I says I undehstands. Yo' name is Willie Watt—W-A-T-T.

WILLIE. Da's right. W-A-tweet-tweet. The last "tweet" is silent, as in cuckoo.

JULIUS (*angry again*). Who's a cuckoo?

WILLIE. Man, oh man, but you sure is peevish. You is as touch-me-not as poison ivy.

JULIUS. Don't you get keerless with yo' language when you talks to Julius Jazbo Jaxon.

WILLIE. Julius Jazbo Jaxon! Is you him?

JULIUS. What if I is?

WILLIE. Oh, sweet patooty!

JULIUS. Who's a sweet patooty?

WILLIE. You is.

JULIUS. Who says I is?

WILLIE. Rosy, she says you is.

JULIUS. Then I reckon mebbe I is. Whar she at?

WILLIE (*pointing*). In the house. (*JULIUS starts toward house. WILLIE extends his hand warningly.*) Hesitate, O brotheh! You is rushin' headlong to death an' destruction.

(*Terrible commotion off-stage, loud crashes, and BOLIVAR yelling.*)

JULIUS. Her ol' man! I reckonize his peevish vocabulary.

WILLIE. Man, you betteh 'vaporate o' you won't reckonize nothin'. He's atteh you with a mule-skinneh.

JULIUS. Atteh me?

WILLIE. Leave him ketch you hangin' roun' hyah, an' he gwine amputate the mundane kayreer of li'l Rosy's sweet patooty.

(*BOLIVAR's yelling bursts out afresh. JULIUS hides behind bench.*)

LIZA enters excitedly from house.

LIZA (*seeing WILLIE*). Say, you.

WILLIE (*with extravagant bow*). Wee-wee, Marie.

LIZA. Ol' Man Brown done been tuk with his misery. He's cuttin' up sump'm scan'lous. Run down street an' fetch a doctor.

WILLIE. When I gits a doctor, does I eat?

LIZA. Hurry! (*Quick exit into house.*)

WILLIE (*checking off on his fingers*). I gits him, I gits him not; I gits him, I gits him not.

LIZA *pokes her head out of door.*

LIZA. Hurry! (*Exit.*)

WILLIE. I gits him. (*Starts shuffling away toward L.*)

JULIUS (*rising from behind bench*). You gits him not!

WILLIE. I gits him.

JULIUS. You gits him not.

WILLIE. Who says I gits him not?

JULIUS. Ten dollahs says you gits him not. (*Shows stage money.*)

WILLIE. Ten dollahs refuseth to be argued with. Who has I got to murder?

JULIUS. Nobody. Jes' tell 'em that the doctor is comin' right smart, and then come along with me.

WILLIE. How you know the doctor comin'?

JULIUS (*flourishing money under WILLIE's nose*). Heed yo' masteh's voice.

WILLIE (*going to house and knocking at door, which is opened by LIZA*). Doctor comin' right smart, French maid. (*Business of bowing and acting polite.*)

LIZA. Thanks, Misteh. (*Smiling.*) Now you come 'round to the kitchen do' an' I'll give you a nice plate o' stewed chicken an' gravy. (*Exit, closing door.*)

WILLIE. Stewed chicken an' gravy! Man, oh man! I allus did like them French mamselles! (*Starts hastily up R. as if to go around to back of house.*)

JULIUS (*jumping after him and grabbing his collar*). Stop!

WILLIE. Hang off o' me, niggeh.

JULIUS. I says stop.

WILLIE. You says stop, but stewed chicken an' gravy says hurry, an' I kain't hear you a-tall. (*Slips out of coat which he leaves in JULIUS' hands and again starts, R.*)

JULIUS (*jumping around in front of him and pulling razor*). Maybe stewed chicken and gravy says hurry, but razzah says let yo' conscience be yo' guide. You got wuk to do.

WILLIE. Wuk? I done it.

JULIUS. You only jes' stahted it. Ten dollahs comin' to you, black boy.

WILLIE. Stewed chicken an' gravy goin' away from me, yaller boy. (*BOLIVAR's yelling is resumed.*)

JULIUS. Let's go. (*Exit, dragging WILLIE with him, down R.*)

Enter BOLIVAR from house, supported on either side by ROSY and LIZA. He has a rag tied around his head, and acts very weak, but his "misery" does not impair his voice.

BOLIVAR (*shouting*). Don't tech me, gal, don't tech me! (*ROSY and LIZA release him*). Does you want to leave me lay right down an' kick the bucket? Grab me quick! (*They start to aid him.*) Take yo' hands off o' me! (*Plaintively.*) Oh, mah misery, mah misery!

ROSY. Set down, paw, an' rest yo' feet.

(*They get him to the bench.*)

BOLIVAR (*angrily*). 'Tain't in mah feet that mah misery is at! (*Sadly.*) Oh, this hyah misery will sho' be the death of me, if I lives long enough! (*Peevishly.*) Why don't that ol' doctor come?

Enter JULIUS and WILLIE during the last speech, down R. They are unobserved by the others. WILLIE is "disguised" with a plug hat, a threadbare frock coat, and a pair of horn-rim spectacles. He carries a handbag. JULIUS points to BOLIVAR and motions WILLIE to go to him, then exits.

ROSY (*seeing WILLIE*). Oh, hyah's the doctor, paw.

BOLIVAR (*to WILLIE*). Is you the doctor?

WILLIE. Yassuh; reckon I is.

(*LIZA looks at WILLIE, puzzled, and scratches her head.*)

WILLIE. Whar's the patient?

BOLIVAR (*peevishly*). Hurry up, niggeh. Hyah I is, hyah I is.

WILLIE. Boss, fo' a patient you is mighty impatient. (*Drops handbag, which falls with a crash.*)

BOLIVAR (*startled*). What's that?

WILLIE. That's mah tools, boss. Lemme see yo' tongue.

BOLIVAR (*drawing away*). You ain't gwine—operate—is you?

WILLIE. Lemme see yo' tongue! (*Pries BOLIVAR's mouth open and looks in it.*) Pretty old critter. M-m. Bad; mighty bad.

BOLIVAR (*frightened*). Is you gwine cut me open?

WILLIE. Mighty bad case o' misery. Ain't jest certain yit whether I'll operate—or blast.

LIZA (*to WILLIE*). Lemme have yo' hat—*Mistah Doctor*. (*Winks wisely at him.*)

(*WILLIE removes his hat, takes from it a tin can labeled "EITHER" and hands hat to her.*)

ROSY (*to WILLIE*). Oh, doctor, is it ketchin'?

WILLIE. Kain't tell yit. He may live fo' several days. (*Business by BOLIVAR.*) What am the symptoms?

ROSY. He was took very suddenly.

WILLIE. That's the way mah brother Sam was took to jail fo' chicken stealin'—suddenly.

BOLIVAR. Well, well, hurry up, niggeh!

WILLIE (*scratching his head*). What does I do next?

ROSY. Why don't you feel his pulse?

WILLIE. Good idea. (*Grabs BOLIVAR's ankle and takes out watch, then realizes his mistake and drops ankle and seizes wrist. BOLIVAR yells as foot falls. WILLIE takes a weather thermometer from his pocket and puts it in BOLIVAR's mouth. Takes out magnifying glass and pretends to look into BOLIVAR's ear.*)

ROSY. Oh, doctor, is it serious?

WILLIE. Thought it was brain fever, but reckon that's impossible. Kain't see no brains. (*Takes thermometer from BOLIVAR's mouth and looks at it.*) Hm, ninety-nine in the shade. 'Tain't so much the heat as it is the humidity.

ROSY. Will he git well?

WILLIE. Not necessarily. The oblongosity of his medulla is exasperated by the periphery of his antediluvian hydrophobia, which indicates a condition of extreme antipathy as regards the vox populi, an'—an'—well, that's how he is.

BOLIVAR. What you talkin' about, man?

WILLIE. Ol' gent, shut up, or they'll be singin' soft music in yo' front parlor, an' you won't hear it. (*Aside to ROSY.*) I ain't no doctor. I come from Julius.

ROSY (*excited*). Julius Jazbo Jaxon?

WILLIE. Yo' sweet patooty. An' I got a letter fo' you. (*Looks toward BOLIVAR.*)

ROSY (*eagerly*). A letter? Gimme it!

WILLIE. Yo' ol' man might ketch us. (*Aloud to LIZA.*) Young woman. Assist the workin's of genius. Hand me mah skitchel. (*LIZA gives him the handbag.*) Now, ol' gent, I will fix yo' a description that is guaranteed to kill or cure.

BOLIVAR. I don't want to git killed.

WILLIE. Well, maybe you'll git cured. You never can tell. (*Takes out from bag tin pan and several bottles, etc. Gives LIZA pan to hold. Pours several liquids into pan, and LIZA holds her nose. Shakes pepper-shaker over pan, and BOLIVAR sneezes. Mixes mess with tin spoon.*)

ROSY (*aside to WILLIE*). The letter! Whar's the letter?

WILLIE (*aside to her*). In mah hat.

(*ROSY gets letter out of hat and exits down R.*)

BOLIVAR. Whar my Rosy gone?

WILLIE. Gone to stew yo' description on the fire.

BOLIVAR. You got mah description thar in the kittle.

WILLIE. She gone to the pump fo' some water. This hyah description is mighty strong fo' a ol' man. (*WILLIE, LIZA and BOLIVAR all sneeze at once.*)

BOLIVAR. Strong! Ah'll say it is. What you got in that kittle, niggeh? Skunk oil?

WILLIE. Has you got a rabbit's foot?

BOLIVAR. Yes, I is. Why?

WILLIE. Then you has got one chance in a thousand to recoveh.

BOLIVAR. Has I got to drink what you got in that kittle?

WILLIE. Cou'se you is. How you reckon yo' gwine to circumnavigate the dustygustics of yo' whangdoodle if you don't irrigate yo' esophogus?

BOLIVAR. Maybe you looks like a doctor to some folks, but you looks to me like a bum.

WILLIE. Git up off o' that bench!

BOLIVAR. Honest, doctor, I is a sick man.

WILLIE. Listen hyah, you big black baboon. When I is diagnosin' a case I don't enjoy bein' consulted. Tha's all.

BOLIVAR. What you gwine do with mah misery?

WILLIE (*taking butcher knife and coil of rope from bag*). Gal, jest set that noodle soup aside fo' to cool, an' we'll proceed with the serious part of this hyah operation. (*Approaches BOLIVAR.*)

BOLIVAR. Don't you lay yo' hands on me, niggeh! (*Draws razor and starts after WILLIE. WILLIE dodges around LIZA, pursued by BOLIVAR.*)

Just as BOLIVAR is directly back of LIZA, JULIUS and ROSY enter down R. LIZA drops the pan, throws up her arms, screams and faints in BOLIVAR's arms.

BOLIVAR (*seeing them*). Julius Jazbo Jaxon—an' mah Rosy. (*To LIZA.*) Leave me loose, woman! Whar's mah mule-skinneh? (*Lets LIZA slide to the floor and rushes around stage.*) Whar's mah mule-skinneh?

WILLIE. Clam yo'seff, ol' man, clam yo'seff!

BOLIVAR. Shet up, you flat-footed fool! Look what they done! (*Points to ROSY and JULIUS.*)

ROSY (*to BOLIVAR*). Yo' forgiveness is all we asks.

LIZA (*who has got up again*). She only done like other gals does. (*Exits into house up R.*)

ROSY. Yes, paw. I fell in love an' I got me married.

JULIUS. Can you blame her, paw?

BOLIVAR. Fetch me mah gun till I shoots that doctor!

WILLIE. Ain't no doctor. If I was, I'd write me a description an' we'd all git half shot.

BOLIVAR. You ain't no doctor. Who is you?

Enter LIZA with a plate of food, from house.

WILLIE. Jes' plain Willie Watt, a wanderin' wagabond without wim, wigor, witality or wittles.

BOLIVAR. Niggeh, what's yo' business?

WILLIE. Dunno. I reckon— (*Liza hands him plate and he slips free arm around her waist.*) I's jest fu'st aid to cupid.

LIZA (*rests her head on his shoulder and looks at him soulfully*). Oh, sweet patooty!

POSITIONS.

JULIUS ROSY

WILLIE LIZA

BOLIVAR

CURTAIN

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By JEFF BRANEN

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ALMOST AN ACTOR.—Coontown crossfire, by Wade Stratton; 2 males. Time, 20 minutes. A seedy manager tries to initiate a station porter into the thespian art, but they find there is little inspiration when hunger gnaws. This skit crackles with fresh gags and comedy business. Both parts are rich.

THE BATTLE OF ROARING-BULL.—A black and copper-colored massacre, by Jeff Branen; 11 or more males. Time, 30 minutes. Two wandering darkies fall into the clutches of a terrible red-skin tribe, with hair-raising results. Can be effectively elaborated with war-dance, etc., introducing entire minstrel troupe as an afterpiece.

THE BLACK VAMP.—By Arthur Leroy Kaser; 2 males, 2 females. Time, 15 minutes. Sam thought his wife didn't appreciate him, so he got his good friend Phil to impersonate a dusky vampire, to liven things up. He livened things up, all right. Chance for song and dance specialties. The female parts can be "doubled."

CASH MONEY.—A minstrel spree for three, by Wade Stratton; 3 males. Time, 20 minutes. Two travelers are forced to share a room in a fust-class cullud boad'in' house, with almost fatal results. The handsome waiter is a factor in the mixup. Fine chance for comedian who plays banjo, ukulele or guitar.

THE COON AT THE DOOR.—A black-and-white skit, by Jeff Branen; 3 males. Time, 20 minutes. The doctor's office boy fears the man at the door is his hated rival, and his efforts to evade a meeting are side-splitting. The white doctor blackens up and doubles as the mysterious coon. Specialties are to be introduced.

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KISS ME, CAMILLE!—Blackface novelty, by Wade Stratton; 2 males, 1 female. Time, 20 minutes. Horatio, the dramatic teacher, finds Lucinda a promising pupil, and they rehearse love scenes with enthusiasm. But Luke McFluke, his other pupil, doesn't take kindly to the course of training, and the instructor is sadly out of luck. The blackface travesty on "Camille" is a scream.

THE MYSTERIOUS SUITCASE.—By Arthur Leroy Kaser; 2 males. Time, 15 minutes. Sam has to carry Harry's grip, and both negroes have a laughable time trying to keep the mystery from leaking out. The fact that they stop to rest near a cemetery also gives Sam cause for serious thinking.

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Country Justice, 15 min.	8	
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Family Strike, 20 min.	3	3
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